

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1106
By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. William D. Sullins, Jr.
of Athens, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. William D. Sullins, Jr., noted optometrist and Rear Admiral, Retired, of the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, Dr. William D. Sullins, Jr. was a consummate professional and determined individual who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, a proud native son of Tennessee, Dr. William D. Sullins, Jr. was a lifelong resident of Athens, graduating from McMinn County High School in 1960 before attending Tennessee Wesleyan College and later the Southern College of Optometry where, in 1965, he obtained his Doctor of Optometry degree; and

WHEREAS, rendering quality care to thousands of patients during his career, Dr. Sullins practiced optometry in Athens for nearly forty years and served as Director of Eye Care Services at Woods Memorial Hospital, earning the respect and admiration of his peers across Tennessee and the nation as a leading authority and practitioner; and

WHEREAS, renowned for his vast contributions to the field of Optometry, Dr. William D. Sullins, Jr. was a prolific author and noted speaker in Optometry, contributing to the clinical education of two generations of America's eye doctors; he was especially proud of a program he established to promote healthy eye care in infants that spread across the country, InfantSEE, which is now a nationwide free infant eye care program endorsed and supported by former President Jimmy Carter; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being a board member of The Laser Center (TLC), the largest provider of laser vision correction services in North America, Dr. Sullins also was a pioneer in

co-operative management of surgical cases between optometrist and eye surgeons, thus bringing quality eye care to rural and underserved areas; and

WHEREAS, appropriately recognized by his colleagues for his expertise and leadership, Dr. Sullins was a highly influential and renowned optometrist who served as president of the Tennessee Optometric Association in 1977, president of the American Optometric Association in 1989-1990 and chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Optometric Association in 1990-1991; he chaired a voluminous number of councils and committees for the Tennessee Optometric Association and the American Optometric Association, as well as the American Academy of Optometry; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sullins served as president of the East Tennessee Optometric Society, founder of the Hiwassee Optometric Society, trustee for the Southern Council of Optometry, Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and the Tennessee Academy of Optometry, vice-president of the Southern College of Optometry Alumni Association, and member of the Board of Trustees of the American Optometric Foundation; and

WHEREAS, a founding member of the National Academies of Practice in Optometry, Dr. Sullins was a member of the Optometric Extension Program Foundation, the Vision Education Foundation, Tennessee Vision Services, the American Public Health Association, the National Eye Research Foundation, the Optometric Historical Society, the Better Vision Institute, and the Multidisciplinary Practice Section, the Sports Vision Section and the Contact Lens Section of the American Optometric Association; and

WHEREAS, he was a charter member and former secretary of the Rural Health Association of Tennessee; a member of the National Health Council, Southeast Regional Liaison Group; vision consultant for the Athens City and McMinn County School Systems; intern preceptor for the Tennessee Optometric Association Assistance to graduates and undergraduates program; and an adjunct faculty member of the Southern College of Optometry and the College of Optometry, University of Alabama at Birmingham; he also developed a post-graduate primary care curriculum for the Southern College of Optometry; and

WHEREAS, proud to serve his country, Dr. William Sullins, Jr. entered the United States Navy in 1967, serving three years as an optometry officer in the Navy and Marine Corps; he would then continue his Navy career serving as clinical optometrist at many Naval Medical

Commands, steadily rising through the ranks, and eventually becoming the first optometrist to ever attain the rank of Rear Admiral in the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, a founding member of the Armed Forces Optometric Society, Rear Admiral Sullins served as Deputy Director of the Medical Services Corps from 1991 until his retirement from the Navy in 1995; in his honor the United States Navy established the "Admiral David Sullins Award" to annually honor the most outstanding junior officer in the Navy Medical Services Corps; and

WHEREAS, an active citizen of his hometown of Athens, Dr. Sullins served with distinction as Mayor of the City of Athens from 1979 to 1982 and was a former president of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, the Athens YMCA and the Athens Kiwanis Club; he also served on the Athens City Council, the Athens Regional Planning Commission, the Athens Area Industrial Acquisition Commission, and the Southeast Tennessee Development District Executive Committee; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sullins also was a member of the American Legion, the McMinn County Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Athens Kiwanis Club, the Executive Committee of Asbury Acres Methodist Home for the Retired, the State Area Advisory Board for C.E.T.A., the Tennessee Municipal League, and the Executive Committee of the Chattanooga Area Council of Government; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sullins donated his time and considerable talents to chair the Capital Campaign for the new YMCA facility in 1971, direct the Unaka District of the Boy Scouts of America, and serve as Exalted Ruler of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks #1927; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sullins served on numerous civic and corporate boards, including the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, First Franklin Bankshares, Bank First, Springbook Golf and Country Club, and First National Bank and Trust of McMinn County; and

WHEREAS, Dr. William D. Sullins, Jr. was the recipient of the Outstanding Young Man of the Year award for 1977 given by the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, received the Distinguished Club President award from the Athens Kiwanis Club, and was honored with the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award by his alma mater, Tennessee Wesleyan College, for his universal humanitarian contributions; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades during his lifetime, Dr. Sullins was honored as Optometrist of the Year by the Tennessee Optometric Society and the Hiwassee Optometric Society and Optometrist of the South by the Southern Council of Optometry, was listed in *Who's Who in Health Care*, *Personalities of the South*, and *Who's Who in South and Southwest*, and was the recipient of the National Heritage Award from the Chattanooga Sertoma and the Distinguished Service Award from the Tennessee Optometric Association; and

WHEREAS, a former Sunday school teacher, Dr. Sullins was an active and devout member of the Keith Memorial United Methodist Church, which he served faithfully for many years as a member of the Administrative Board and the Staff Parish Relations Committee; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his mother, Mildred Fair Sullins, Dr. Sullins is survived by his wife, Leslie Methvin Sullins; his father and stepmother, Dr. William David, Sr. and Martha Ann Sullins; two sons and daughters-in-law, Drs. William David, "Trey", III and Christa Sullins, and Dr. Stuart and Amy Sullins; five grandsons, Timothy Blake Sullins, Jonathon David Sullins, George William Sullins, Samuel Harrison Sullins and Andrew David Sullins; former wife, Judith Jones Sullins; two sisters and brothers-in-law, Mary Fair and Robert Bowmaster, and Susie and Peter Dufresne; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sullins leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional medical professional, public servant, and humanitarian; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. William David Sullins, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Dr. Sullins.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.